

Executive Summary:

PRELIMINARY WETLAND RESTORATION PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in coordination with the National Park Service (NPS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), recently submitted a preliminary proposal and funding request to the Wildlife Conservation Board of the State of California (WCB) to restore important wetlands in the California Desert Conservation Area (California Desert) by removing exotic plants. The predominant exotic plant occurring in California Desert wetlands is saltcedar, and the proposal submitted to the WCB is based on the work necessary to control this invasive weed. The preliminary proposal describes a coordinated exotic plant control effort over a period of 12 years with an estimated cost of approximately \$5.6 million.

Wetland and riparian habitats are rare in the California Desert. However, these habitats are among the most important ones because of the diversity and abundance of both plant and animal life they support. Exotic vegetation occurring in desert wetlands nearly always contains large amounts of saltcedar, and may include other species.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

The proposed wetland restoration project involves 60 sites located within 14 areas. Lands involved are managed by the BLM, NPS at Death Valley National Park, and State Ecological Reserves and Wildlife Areas managed by the CDFG. The project would occur, as follows:

Northern Mojave Desert

- Involves lands managed by the BLM, NPS, and CDFG
- Project would be carried out in 5 areas containing 27 sites, comprising approximately 393 acres.
- Project duration is 5 years, costing an estimated \$637,000.

Central Mojave Desert

- Involves lands managed by the BLM and CDFG
- Project would be carried out in 5 areas containing 19 sites, comprising approximately 900 acres.
- Project duration is 8 years, costing an estimated \$1,500,000.

Colorado Desert

- Involves lands managed by the BLM and CDFG
- Project would be carried out in 4 areas containing 14 sites, comprising 1,350 acres.
- Project duration is 12 years, costing an estimated \$2,900,000.

DEVELOPMENT OF A FINAL PROPOSAL

Scott Clemmons of the WCB has responded to the preliminary project proposal. He has requested the BLM, NPS, and CDFG identify funding sources that are available to carry out the proposed exotic plant control work, and to work with him in developing a final proposal that would be submitted to the WCB for funding consideration.

The BLM has requested a meeting with representatives of the NPS and CDFG to identify sources of funding for the proposed project and to develop a final proposal in concert with Scott Clemmons.